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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, February 29, 1932.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Beefsteak Pie for Monday," Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Eggs at Any Meal."

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By way of celebrating saving day, our Monday menu is a simplified dinner---simple to prepare, simple to serve, simple for the dishwasher and easy on the purse.

The simplest kind of a dinner I know of is the kind usually called a "one-dish" meal, with the entire main course cooked and served together. Instead of serving the meat on a platter, the vegetables each in their separate serving dishes, the gravy, sauces, relishes, and so forth also in separate containers, the simplified meal combines all these first course items in one dish. That saves labor, saves dishwashing and saves Mother. For a busy day especially we recommend a one-dish meal.

Not that there's anything new about this kind of menu. It's as old as history and as widespread as geography. The first dinners ever cooked on this planet, I'm pretty sure, were all done in one pot--the fresh meat brought in by the cave man was stewed up with the root vegetables the cave women and children had brought home from their morning outing. I'm a bit hazy on the cooking methods of the cave woman--if any. But one thing I'm certain of--if she cooked, it was a simplified meal.

As for geography, every country has its traditional one-dish meal. There's Irish stew, Hungarian goulash, Indian curry, chop suey, chili con carne and so on--all dishes to make a meal on.

Which goes to prove that housewives of different climes and races have many of the same ideas about this eternal job of feeding the family, even if they express them in different ways. We're all interested in simplifying meals now and then, whether we live on Greenland's icy mountains or India's coral strand.

Of course, that term "one-dish" meal isn't an exact description of the menu. As a matter of fact, it's only the main course that is served "all of a piece", as Aunt Het used to say. Salad, bread and dessert often supplement the "one dish" These simple extras provide the variety of texture and flavor that any meal needs.

Take a stew, for example. There's one of the old favorite all-in-one dishes. But even the best stew won't completely satisfy by itself. It's likely to be too monotonous! Something crisp and fresh is needed for contrast. So supplement a stew with a crisp salad of raw vegetables or fruits. Then, for contrast, something with a sweet flavor might be served at the end of the meal—a fruit dessert, perhaps. Or, if the day's milk requirement isn't already provided, a custard dessert is a good way to finish the meal.

But to get on to our special simplified menu for today. Just three items on the menu. First, beefsteak pie. Second, head lettuce with Thousand Island dressing. Third, apricot whip. Simple to prepare, and, as we mentioned, easy on the purse.

The Menu Specialist has a special word to add at this point. She says that if this meal doesn't seem quite hearty enough for all members of the family, you can add baked potatoes. As long as the oven must be used for the pie anyway, the potatoes may be baked right along with it. There are some people, men especially, who don't call dinner dinner unless they have potatoes.

Did you get the complete picture of this simple meal? Apricot whip, for dessert, crisp lettuce salad, baked potatoes, if you like, and a beefsteak pie for the main course.

Sing a song of sixpence
A pocketful of rye
Four and twenty beefsteaks
Cooked in a pie.

No, no, children. I'm afraid that verse won't do after all. Our recipe doesn't call for four and twenty of anything. And it doesn't call for expensive steaks. No, ours is a delicious but thrifty pie made from inexpensive cuts of beef.

But when the pie is opened
You can all begin to sing,
"Now isn't that a handsome dish
To set before a king?"

This all-in-one dish ought to suit a king—or anyone else. Here's the recipe —

Ten ingredients

2 tablespoons fat	1 pint canned tomatoes
2 tablespoons chopped parsley	1/2 cup water
1 medium-sized onion, sliced	1-1/2 teaspoons salt
1 pound round or chuck	1-1/2 cups canned string
beefsteak cut in inch cubes	beans, cut
3 tablespoons flour	Few drops tabasco

I'll repeat that list of ten. (Repeat.)

R-H.C. 2/29/30

Melt the fat in a heavy skillet. Add the onion and parsley and cook for a few minutes. Roll the meat in the flour, add to the fat and the onion, and brown the meat well on all sides. Pour the tomatoes over the meat, add the water, cover and simmer until the meat is tender. Season and stir in the string beans, adding some of the bean liquid if the stew is too thick. Pour the stew into a baking dish, cover with a pastry crust or mashed potatoes and bake in a moderate oven until the top is golden brown. Serve at once.

Left-over beef may be used in this same way except that it will not be rolled in flour and browned. The ingredients will be combined and heated thoroughly before the crust is added and the pie put in the oven to bake.

Our dessert is apricot whip. That's another item planned with an eye on the purse strings. Give dried fruits a regular place on your winter menu. They'll provide so many good desserts at such low cost and they'll add some valuable minerals to the diet.

To make the whip, wash the dried apricots very carefully. Then soak them overnight in cold water. Then cook them gently, until they're soft, in the water in which they were soaked. Now press them through a sieve. Add sugar. Set them on the stove to heat. Then you're ready to add to the stiffly beaten egg whites.

Fruit whips like this are easy desserts. You can make them of any fruit pulp that has flavor and color. You heat the fruit pulp, as I said, to dissolve the sugar. And then you combine it while hot with the stiffly beaten egg whites. The hot pulp partially cooks the egg whites, you see, and that gives body to the mixture. Now you can serve this mixture just as it is. Or you can put it in a baking dish and make a baked whip in the oven. Bake it in a dish surrounded by water just as you do custard. The water line, you know, should come well above the food line for baking and an even texture. If you use a very slow oven (225 to 250 degrees F.) for about an hour, the whip shouldn't fall. Baked whip is good either hot or cold.

Whipped cream? That's delicious with any fruit whip, baked or not.

Now how to make an uncooked whip that will keep light and fluffy several hours? The answer is, - use gelatin. Here's the way you do it. Soften a teaspoon of gelatin in a tablespoon of cold water. Add this to the cup of hot sweetened fruit pulp and stir until the gelatin is dissolved. Now add this to the beaten egg whites. Then stir in the whipped cream. Set it away in a chilly place. Another dish fit for a king.

Some of my helpful and thrifty friends have been sending me their household discoveries, so I'll pass a few good ones along.

Here's one about the ironing board. Of course, any ironing board does its best work if it is well padded and very smooth. Sometimes it's difficult to make the covering smooth. A housekeeper in Ohio says that she tacks the ironing board cover on wet. When it's dry, no wrinkles remain and it's absolutely tight and straight.

R-H.C. 2/29/32

Another ironing board idea comes from Oregon. Though the most convenient ironing boards are usually those that are attached to the wall, sometimes it's necessary to use a movable board that stands on end against the wall when not in use. The end it stands on, naturally, becomes soiled easily. But you can protect it with an oilcloth slip, made flat like a pillow slip and just to fit the end. Before setting the board away just slip on this oilcloth cover.

Here's a thrift suggestion from a lady who likes to make food look tempting. When she hasn't green parsley to use as a garnish, she uses celery leaves or even the green outer leaves of cabbage or brussels sprouts, carefully shredded with scissors or a sharp knife.

Tuesday - "The Front Hall Closet".

